



## 2023-2027 COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN Proposed Pillars, Goals and Actions

### Overview

Northumberland County is on the cusp of transformational change. Set to grow to over 122,000 residents by 2051, the intersection of critical requirements related to workforce development, housing, transportation, health, and broadband connectivity reveals a clear overarching mandate for our organization: to guide this growth with intention.

In the face of both opportunities and challenges arising from this anticipated growth, this strategic plan will be the County's principal guidance document. It will inform how we shape our community in alignment with the County's mission, vision and values, Council's direction, and shared community priorities.

### How to Read this Plan

All efforts undertaken by Northumberland County stem from our corporate vision, mission, and core values. The County's vision and mission express the organization's purpose and how we will achieve our objectives. Core values are the principles that guide the County's actions.

- **Vision:** To bring together people, partnerships, and possibilities, for a strong and vibrant Northumberland.
- **Mission:** To be a best practices leader in county government, and a collaborative partner with member municipalities and community partners.
- **Core Values:**
  - Accountability
  - Care & Support
  - Collaboration & Communication
  - Honesty & Integrity
  - Innovation & Excellence
  - Mutual Trust & respect

In developing the 2023-2027 Community Strategic Plan, Northumberland County encouraged broad participation in a collaborative process to establish a shared vision for Northumberland's future, and goals and actions to achieve in pursuit of this vision, to guide intentional growth for our community.

**The Community Strategic Plan Principal Direction** is a shared vision for the future of Northumberland, based on a consolidation of feedback gathered through this process:

- Northumberland County is recognized as a vibrant and connected twenty-first century community. We embrace innovation, respect our natural environment, and celebrate diversity to shape, together, an inclusive, prosperous, and thriving future for all.

**Five strategic pillars** will underpin the important work required to actively pursue this vision. These pillars reflect the key themes that emerged through the strategic planning process. Together, they chart our course for the path that lies ahead. They provide a framework to direct planning and decision-making over the next four years and beyond. These are:

- Innovate for Service Excellence
- Ignite Economic Opportunity
- Foster a Thriving Community
- Proper Sustainable Growth
- Champion a Vibrant Future

Each pillar includes:

- A direction – or vision of what the ideal state looks like for our operations.
- Guiding principles – derived from this vision.
- Goals and actions – that we aim to achieve in pursuit of this vision.

**Goals and actions** tied to each pillar have been defined based on broad input, and careful consideration of what will be required to guide and accommodate community growth for a thriving and prosperous twenty-first century Northumberland.

## **Pillar 1: Innovate for Service Excellence**

**Direction:** We embrace a culture of innovation. We pursue partnerships, integrate technology, attract and develop top talent, and use data to inform decision-making, to deliver the impactful services our residents need today, and ensure readiness for those that will be needed tomorrow.

### **Guiding Principles**

- Northumberland County is a strategic, fiscally responsible municipality focused on meeting the needs of a growing community while maintaining affordability for taxpayers.
- Close working relationships with member municipalities enables coordination of services and resources for efficient delivery of services to residents.
- Where technology adds value to service delivery, it is adopted in a deliberative and swift manner.
- Data is managed and used effectively to design and deliver impactful public services and drive innovation.
- Communication is research-informed, timely, targeted, results-focused, and rooted in inclusivity.
- Community members are empowered to participate in municipal decision-making and service design in ways that are meaningful to them.
- County staffing models ensure sufficient resources are in place to meet identified needs, and employees are equipped with the skills and technology to deliver exceptional service.

### **Goals & Actions**

- **Expand Municipal Collaboration**
  - Expand voluntary shared services between the County and member municipalities to enhance efficiency between levels of government – reducing costs, increasing capacity, and improving services for residents.
  - Strengthen collaborative strategic planning between Northumberland municipalities to improve resident engagement and clarify the services and value delivered by local municipal governments.
- **Integrate Leading-Edge Technologies**
  - Seek out and introduce leading-edge technologies to reduce costs, improve County services and create better resident experiences.
  - Design an Open Government Framework that maximizes digital and data resources for efficient and effective service delivery, and reinforces the County's transparency and accountability.

- **Enhance Strategic Financial Management**
  - Implement best practice models for municipal strategic financial planning and investment, including a multi-year budgeting process and development of public-private sector partnerships.
- **Develop Talent**
  - Implement policies and practices to ensure the County is an inclusive and equity-based employer of choice, where employees feel empowered to deliver exceptional service.
  - Implement the Northumberland County People Plan to guide actions and investments for recruitment and retention of County staff and development of key competencies, positioning the organization to effectively guide community growth and innovation.
- **Strengthen Communications and Engagement**
  - Develop and implement a Communications Master Plan that supports inclusive and effective public services and trust in municipal government by fostering a community that is informed about County services, and engaged in shaping municipal priorities, policies, and programs.

## Pillar 2: Ignite Economic Opportunity

**Direction:** We ignite economic innovation, resilience, and prosperity by positioning the infrastructure and services businesses need to thrive.

### Guiding Principles

- Northumberland strives to be an Intelligent Community, pursuing vision-driven, community-focused, technology-enabled solutions to address modern challenges and opportunities.
- Investments in infrastructure and services for retaining and growing innovation strengthen key economic sectors and contribute to a diversified economy.
- Northumberland is a destination of choice for talent and knowledge-based business.
- Digital service delivery and innovation grows as residents and businesses increasingly access the internet via their choice of high-speed broadband providers.

### Goals & Actions

- **Expand Connectivity**
  - Collaborate with private sector, federal and provincial partners to roll out fibre-to-the-home broadband infrastructure across Northumberland, ensuring every household and business has access to high-speed internet.
- **Increase Transportation Capacity**
  - Support expanded access to local and regional public transportation networks to keep Northumberland on the move.
- **Attract Talent**
  - Lead innovative strategies to attract the talent that Northumberland's economy requires, particularly in key sectors such as advanced manufacturing, agriculture, and health care.
  - Overcome barriers to workforce attraction by collaborating with public and private sector partners to develop workforce housing.
- **Stimulate Innovative Business**
  - Foster a vibrant start-up economy by building on existing assets and services to support small business entrepreneurship, with focused programming targeting under-represented demographics such as women and youth.

- Leverage proximity to the Innovation Corridor in place-branding strategies to position the County as a preferred location for innovation-based businesses and emerging industries.

## Pillar 3: Foster a Thriving Community

**Direction:** We foster a liveable, healthy, and inclusive community, where diversity is celebrated and people from all walks of life feel a sense of belonging.

### Guiding Principles

- Northumberland County upholds human rights and is committed to dismantling barriers in the way of creating an inclusive and equitable workplace and community.
- Relationships between the County, Indigenous residents, and neighbouring First Nations communities are cultivated based on trust and collaboration.
- Residents of all ages and income levels have access to affordable, safe housing.
- Health care and community services are well connected, creating a coordinated, accessible system of supports for residents.
- Children and families have access to quality early years programming and child care.

### Goals & Actions

- **Foster a Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Organization and Community**
  - Demonstrate leadership in the development of strategies and commitment of resources to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion, both organizationally and within the community.
- **Advance Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation**
  - Establish and implement an organizational Indigenous relations and reconciliation action plan to guide meaningful engagement, cultural learning and understanding, and respectful action towards reconciliation with Indigenous communities.
- **Enhance Community Health and Well-Being**
  - Collaborate with Ontario Health Team of Northumberland partners to advance health and well-being priorities for Northumberland, including improving access to primary and specialty care, improving access to mental health and addiction services, and supporting older adults to live well at home.
  - Review the deployment of paramedic response resources throughout the county to ensure alignment with community growth trends, enabling sustainable rapid response to emergencies.
  - Partner with health service providers to expand health promotion and illness prevention measures linked to social determinants of health, improving community wellness.

- **Increase Development of Affordable Housing**
  - Develop and implement policies, lead innovative partnerships, and make strategic investments to incentivize and accelerate the development of housing across a range of affordability.
  - Leverage funding, financing, and partnerships to purchase land and directly deliver more affordable housing for the community.
- **Expand Pathways Out of Homelessness**
  - Implement findings from the 2022 Emergency Shelter System Review to better support vulnerable residents seeking pathways out of homelessness.
  - Collaborate with health service partners to integrate mental health and drug addiction strategies and services with homelessness system services to further support life stabilization and improved outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.
- **Expand services for children and families**
  - Increase child care spaces in priority neighbourhoods to support Northumberland families and enhance workforce development.



## **Pillar 4: Propel Sustainable Growth**

**Direction:** We balance the benefits of development and intensification with preservation of our rural heritage, and lead in environmental stewardship, building complete communities that create a high quality of life for all residents.

### **Guiding Principles**

- Effective land use planning fosters complete communities, enhancing connections between people, places, and resources.
- Natural environments are conserved, enhanced, and connected.
- Northumberland's natural assets are a competitive advantage in growing the visitor economy.
- Infrastructure investments made today support long-term liveability and prosperity in Northumberland.
- Capital planning supported by leading practices for asset management ensures the preservation and expansion of infrastructure that underpins a high standard of living.
- Practical, balanced actions mitigate the environmental impact of County operations, protecting the environment for residents today and in the future.
- The County plans for climate-related challenges and ensures the community is equipped to respond to weather events.
- Accessible and safe infrastructure for cyclists, pedestrians, and transit reduces reliance on personal vehicles, improving community health and environmental sustainability.

### **Goals & Actions**

- **Direct Growth**
  - Finalize updates to the County Official Plan to guide growth and development in Northumberland in an intentional manner.
  - Direct development and density to settlement areas to expand housing availability while preserving rural heritage through policies that conserve agricultural land and protect green infrastructure such as woodlands, wetlands, and watercourses.
- **Build and Maintain Infrastructure**
  - Collaborate with government and private sector partners to ensure growth is funded and managed in a way that is sustainable.

- Advance data-based asset management planning that balances infrastructure service levels and risk with sustainable investments to ensure a thriving, resilient future for Northumberland.
- Progress key infrastructure projects to meet the needs of a growing community, including completing the Golden Plough Lodge & Northumberland County Archives and Museum facility along with a joint emergency services base in Brighton, and advancing plans for the new Trent River Crossing in Campbellford and a Consolidated County Public Works Yard.
- **Expand Active Transportation Network**
  - Continue embedding principles of active transportation into road and bridge design and construction, expanding the network of cycling and pedestrian walkways and multi-use trails within and between Northumberland municipalities.
- **Grow a resilient, sustainable tourism sector**
  - Support revitalization of the tourism sector by marketing Northumberland's unique local nature- and culture-based experiences to capitalize on growing interest in wellness- and ecotourism.
- **Respond to the Climate Crisis**
  - Reduce the carbon footprint of County operations through development of a Climate Action Plan.
  - Coordinate public education campaigns and municipal emergency exercises to enhance preparedness for extreme weather events and other community emergencies.
- **Manage Waste Responsibly**
  - Deliver public education campaigns and improvements to waste services to progress towards a target of 75% diversion of waste from landfill.
  - Launch a municipal Environmental Assessment process to determine long-term solutions for waste disposal once the Brighton Landfill reaches capacity by approximately 2031.
  - Support the province's vision for a circular economy by helping households transition to a producer-led recycling system by 2026.

## Pillar 5: Champion a Vibrant Future

**Direction:** We proactively build strong relationships with other levels of government, municipal and community partners to address community needs and interests, influence policies, and advance municipal goals.

### Guiding Principles

- Engaging in advocacy and strategic partnerships is vital to achieve workable solutions to opportunities and challenges facing the community that may be outside of the County's direct sphere of influence.
- Senior leadership actively engages with key influencers to build networks that drive new forms of value and advantage for the community.

### Goals & Actions

- **Intensify Government Relations**
  - Strengthen capacity for advocacy and government relations to advance community priorities.
  - Join municipal networks in advocating to other levels of government:
    - For a new municipal funding framework that reduces reliance on property tax, developing a sustainable long-term funding model that supports improved delivery of community infrastructure and services.
    - On the importance of formally embedding direction on housing affordability into policy and updating funding models between levels of government to fully unlock municipalities' ability to do their part to solve the housing supply crisis.
    - For a coordinated system response to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness that incorporates the physical health, mental health and addiction wrap-around support services people need, in addition to the shelter and case management supports currently overseen by municipalities.
    - To tie social assistance rates to the rate of inflation and increase rates beyond 2018 levels to ensure recipients can meet basic needs in an environment of soaring cost of living.
  - Advocate for corporate and public sector investments in regional transit options that connect Northumberland with neighbouring communities, powering economic development.

- Collaborate with Ontario Health Team of Northumberland partners to advocate and advance strategies for increased access to local primary care and community services for residents.